

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14601

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IT, PINT, PINR

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SECRETARY OF LABOR

1. SUMMARY. SECRETARY OF LABOR USERY SPENT TWO VERY PRODUCTIVE DAYS IN ROME, DURING WHICH TIME HE HAD A DISCUSSION IN DEPTH WITH THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR AND MET WITH TOP LABOR AND MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS. MINISTER ANSELMI WAS VERY POSITIVE IN HER APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE MULTINATIONALS, SAYING THAT EARLIER PROBLEMS WERE BEING OVERCOME AS BOTH LABOR AND MANAGEMENT GAINED AN APPRECIATION OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE PLAYED BY THE OTHER. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, MEDITATION PRACTICES, WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE AND COMMUNIST PENETRATION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM WERE OTHER SUBJECT COVERED SUBSTANTIALLY. THE SECRETARY'S VISIT PROVIDED A VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN CONTACTS WITH TOP ITALIAN LABOR,

MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY OF LABOR USERY, ACCCOMPANIED BY THREE AIDES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, VISITED ROME DURING THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 2-4. THE SECRETARY'S PROGRAM INCLUDED A CALL ON THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR, TINA ANSELMI, AS WELL AS A WORKING LUNCH HOSTED BY THE CHARGE WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY ITALY'S TWO TOP DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONISTS -- STORTI AND VANNI -- AS WELL AS THE NEW UNDER SECRETARY OF LABOR ARMATO AND LEADING MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS.

3. THE CALL ON MINISTER ANSELMI PRODUCED EXTENDED EXCHANGES OF VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES ON SEVERAL SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST: THE MEDIATION OF LABOR DISPUTES, WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE, MULTINATIONALS, RATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG FIRST-TIME JOB SEEKERS AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT.

4. MINISTER ANSELMI POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS NO COMPULSORY ARBITRATION IN ITALY, NOR CAN THE GOVERNMENT STEP IN TO MEDIATE A DISPUTE UNLESS BOTH PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE SO REQUEST. STILL, MANY DISPUTES ARE REFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR MEDIATION; AT TIMES, SHE POINTED OUT, THESE INVOLVE NOT ONLY THE TRADITIONAL DISPUTES BETWEEN LABOR AND MANAGEMENT BUT ALSO BETWEEN DIFFERENT UNIONS. MEDIATION IS FURTHER ENCUMBERED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH CERTAIN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, I.E., THE COMMUNIST UNIONS, ARE LINKED TO POLITICAL PARTIES WHICH ADVOCATE BASIC CHANGES IN THE PREVAILING SOCIAL SYSTEM. MINISTER ANSELMI PROUDLY NOTED THAT HER LAST ACT AS UNDER SECRETARY OF LABOR WAS SUCCESSFULLY TO MEDIATE A LONG-STANDING PROBLEM INVOLVING THE AMERICAN MULTINATIONAL AUTOVOX (MOTOROLA), AND HER FIRST ACT AS MINISTER WAS TO SIGN THE ENSUING AGREEMENT.

5. THIS LED TO A DISCUSSION OF MULTINATIONALS. MINISTER ANSELMI INDICATED THAT THE CLIMATE HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY OF LATE. THE EARLIER DISTRUST BETWEEN THE MULTINATIONALS, WHO FELT THE UNIONS WERE HOSTILE AND TRYING TO DRIVE THEM OUT OF THE COUNTRY, AND THE UNIONS, WHO SUSPECTED THE MULTINATIONALS OF SEEKING TO LIQUIDATE AND FLEE THE COUNTRY, HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY OVERCOME. SHE GAVE CREDIT TO THE EMBASSY AS WELL FOR HAVING ASSISTED IN RESOLVING SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS. SHE FELT THAT LABOR WAS COMING TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT, IN CERTAIN SECTORS, INDUSTRY COULD NOT

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SURVIVE OR PROGRESS WITHOUT THE MULTINATIONALS AND THAT RECENTLY "EVEN A SOCIALIST LABOR OFFICIAL" HAD EXPRESSED TO HER A FAVORABLE OPINION ABOUT THEIR PRESENCE IN ITALY.

6. MINISTER ANSELMI NOTED THAT IN ITALY THE LABOR FORCE CONSTITUTED ONLY SOME 37 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION, AND THAT ONLY 19 PERCENT OF WOMEN WORK. WITH SUCH RELATIVELY LOW PROPORTIONS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, THE GOVERNMENT SEES AS ITS MAIN CONCERN THE NEED TO

RETAIN THE CURRENT LEVEL OF JOBS AND TO EXPAND THEIR NUMBER AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. YOUNG PEOPLE -- FIRST TIME JOB SEEKERS --
ARE PARTICULARLY AFFECTED BY THE CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. SHE
ASSERTED THAT SOME 800,000 YOUTH ARE UNEMPLOYED. IN THE ENSUING
EXCHANGE, THE MINISTER AND SECRETARY USERY NOTED WITH INTEREST THAT,
WHILE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT WAS VERY SERIOUS IN BOTH COUNTRIES, THERE
WAS A BASIC DIFFERENCE: IN ITALY, IT IS THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO
HAVE COMPLETED THEIR EDUCATION WHO ARE HAVING THE GREATEST
DIFFICULTY IN FINDING JOBS, WHEREAS IN THE UNITED STATES THE
PROBLEM IS MOST CRITICAL AMONG THE DROPOUTS AND THE UNDEREDUCATED.

7. THE SOLUTION IN ITALY, MINISTER ANSELMI SAID, IS TO MOUNT
A MAJOR CAMPAIGN OF COUNSELING IN THE SCHOOLS, TO STEER THE
EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARD THE JOBS AND PROFESSIONS WHICH
REQUIRE MANPOWER AND WHICH, IN MANY CASES, PROFFER UNFILLED JOBS
TODAY. SHE NOTED THAT THE SCHOOLS WERE ALSO A MAJOR POINT OF
PENETRATION BY THE COMMUNISTS, EVEN MORE THAN IN THE FACTORIES.
WHEREAS THE MORE EXPERIENCED WORKERS RECOGNIZED THE THREAT TO
LIBERTY AND TO ECONOMIC WELL-BEING POSED BY COMMUNIST ADVANCES AND
VOTED IN GREATER NUMBER FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES LAST JUNE, THE
SAME WAS NOT TRUE OF THE YOUTH WHO BELIEVE IN "A COMMUNISM ITALIAN
STYLE". THE MINISTER ADDED THAT "WE MUST DISABUSE THEM OF THIS FAITH".

8. COMMENT: SECRETARY USERY'S VISIT, THOUGH BRIEF, WAS OF GREAT
VALUE TO THE EMBASSY. IT AFFORDED A WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO MEET
WITH THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR AND TO STRENGTHEN CONTACTS WITH
TOP FIGURES IN LABOR AND MANAGEMENT CIRCLES. WE HAVE REASON TO
THINK THAT THE SECRETARY, TOO, WAS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF
HIS VISIT HERE. WE WOULD WELCOME A RETURN VISIT BY SECRETARY
USERY TO AID IN PURSUING FURTHER THE STRENGTHENING OF TIES BETWEEN
THE LABOR MOVEMENTS AND GOVERNMENTS OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

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